



TULAREMIA

What is TULAREMIA?

Tularemia is a highly infectious bacterial disease found in many animals, especially rabbits and rodents. It is commonly referred to as "Rabbit Fever." Tularemia occurs in all parts of the United States and in all months of the year. Occurrence of the disease may be higher in adults in early winter during rabbit hunting season and in children during the summer when ticks and deer flies are plentiful.

Signs and Symptoms:

The person may develop a skin ulcer at the site where the infection entered the body, swollen lymph nodes, fever, headache, muscle aches, joint pain, dry cough, and weakness within 1-14 days of exposure. Swallowing the bacteria may produce sore throat, stomach pain, diarrhea and vomiting. If you breathe in the bacteria, you could develop pneumonia. People with pneumonia can have chest pain, difficulty breathing and bloody sputum.

Transmission:

Not transmitted person-to-person. People usually get the disease after being bitten by an infected tick, deerfly or other insect, handling infected animal carcasses, eating or drinking contaminated meat or water, or inhaling airborne bacteria.

Treatment:

Antibiotics.

Diagnosis:

Laboratory testing.

What can you do?

Wear gloves while handling animal skins or raw animal products and wash your hands afterwards. The bacteria are easy to kill using heat (cooking meat thoroughly), disinfectants and/or bleach.

Whom do you call?

Delaware Division of Public Health: 1-888-295-5156.

For more information:

Visit the CDC website:
www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/tularemia/facts.asp.